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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written submission by the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance of Tanzania*

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Human Rights Council hereby transmits the communication submitted by the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance of Tanzania**, reproduced below in accordance with rule 7(b) of the rules of procedures described in the annex to Council resolution 5/1, according to which participation of national human rights institutions is to be based on arrangements and practices agreed upon by the Commission on Human Rights, including resolution 2005/74 of 20 April 2005

* National human rights institution with A status accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

** Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission only.

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Annex

Persons with albinism in Tanzania

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRAGG) is pleased to give a statement in this 37th Session of the Council and thank the Council for their commitment in ensuring that human rights are well protected worldwide.

In this session, CHRAGG would like to congratulate the Tanzanian government for the initiatives it has taken in making sure disability rights are well protected and promoted in the country, where among the undertaken measures is the protection of right of Persons with Albinism including prosecution of perpetrators of this shameful crime.

So far the government has signed and domesticated number of International and Regional human rights instruments that protect and recognize the rights of person with disabilities. We can all agree that our government has been forefront in ensuring that atrocities against persons with albinism have been stopped and their rights being respected and protected by every individual. This sets the country as a good example for many other African countries going through the same problem.

We would also like to extend our congratulations to the United Nations Independent Expert on the enjoyment of rights of persons with albinism for the work she has been doing in fulfilling the mission of promoting and protecting human rights of persons with albinism. The Commission would also like to thank the United Nations Country Team of Tanzania for their effective cooperation.

Initiatives taken by the Institution

The Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance is an independent government institution and is vested with a broad mandate, powers and competence to promote, protect and preserve human rights and principles of good governance in Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar Island.

The institution convened several stakeholders meetings with the aim of adopting measures to end the killings and brutalities committed against persons with albinism since the incidents were first reported in 2007.

The meetings were conducted in collaboration with the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government, Judiciary, Office of the Attorney Generals Chamber (AGC), Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) and other stakeholders from the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Media and Religious organizations.

Measures taken

Among the measures taken in those meetings includes:

- Creation of public awareness on the rights of persons with Albinism, where all stakeholders should ensure that the existing initiatives and strategies are disseminated such that no community should remain unreached by awareness and other campaigns to end attacks and killings of Persons with Albinism,
- Developing Action Plan to end the problem, which contains specific tasks for every stakeholder, within specified time frame and report quarterly on measures taken,
- The President Office- Regional Administration and Local Government should get involved in all activities and interventions particularly in local government authorities on activities that aim to combat attacks and killings of Persons with Albinism.

- Bringing to justice the alleged perpetrators of these barbaric acts.

Challenges

Challenges which hinder the efforts to stop the killings of persons with albinism includes:

- **Cultural barriers and myths.** There are societies which still believe that persons with albinism are not normal persons. This is mainly due to lack of understanding on albinism, that it is the lack of melanin in the human skin and that a human being is born with albinism when both parents carry a gene of albinism. Negative beliefs are widespread in the societies that PWA are unique human beings who possess supernatural powers which can be exploited for economic or political advantage,

- **Financial constraints and lack of adequate working tools.** Financial constraints as well as inadequate working tools among some government authorities working on the protection of the human rights of persons with albinism is a major challenge in ending attacks against PWA,,

- **Some of PWA lives in the risk areas.** Some of the PWAs are living in isolated places and remote rural areas which is a risk to their security. Some of them live in restricted areas such as game and forest reserves, a situation which further endanger their lives.

- **Failure to differentiate between Traditional healers and witchdoctors.** There is a problem of differentiating between alternative traditional medicine practitioners and witchdoctors. These are accused for fueling the demand of some parts of PWAs for witchcrafts beliefs.

The Commission continues to work with the State, Civil Society Organisations and other international mechanisms so as to end atrocities against persons with albinism.